A MAY-DAY INTERLUDE.

CHARACTERS.

THE PROLOCUTOR.

WINTER.

SUMMER, OR THE MAY QUEEN.

THE MAY GARLAND.

JACK-IN-THE-GREEN.

THE SUN-CHARMER,

THE RAIN-CHARMER.

THE WIND-CHARMER.

Attendants: Girls and Boys of the Village.

A MAY-DAY INTERLUDE.

THE Interlude takes place on a wide open space, either green sward or bare earth well swept, in the centre of which stands the May Pole. This should be of good height, decorated with flowers and coloured rags according to fancy; it is however essential that to the top should be tied a branch covered with fresh green leaves. Near the May Pole there should be dug in the ground a small hole about two feet square and a few inches deep. If acted in Campden, and unless among the old ruins by the church, the famous open Market Place will serve.
Round three sides of the space should stand the spectators, the fourth side being reserved for the performers ranged in their due order.
When all is in readiness, one steps forward who speaks the following lines:

THE PROLOCUTOR:

Ye folks of Campden, here we bring a scene
Set forth in simple form, that may perchance
In time long gone, on this same spot, have then
Been by your fathers played. By us in sport,
By them in serious play, the selfsame thing
Is shadowed forth; now that old Winter grim
Gives, (slowly dying,) place to Summer kind.
For them as well for us, on this glad day
Old Winter's spirit fled, and summer came
With gifts of flowers, and the earth's increase,
And quickened pulses in the blood of men.
They handselled Summer, sped old Winter forth
With spells, charms, rites, and ancient witchery,

Which here are mimickèd by these our players.
In these wise days, we laugh at spells and charms—
They're only sport for us: And yet, who knows?
On this May-day, (in form we cannot see,)
The Winter God may Northward speeding be,
Driven by the warm breath of the Summer God
Who comes all sweetly clad in palest green.
Let us believe our fathers then were right
And pay them homage due. It may do good,
Secure us from the Winter God's return,
Bring us warm sun, soft rain, and plenteous fruits—
It may do good! 'Twill do no harm! Let be—
And to our play—

[*The Prolocutor withdraws.*

After a slight pause Winter and three attendants step forward. All are dressed in sad coloured cloaks that cover them completely & trail on the ground. Winter carries a dead branch in his hand and wears a long grey beard in which dead leaves are sticking. He walks slowly and stiffly, with downcast mien. The three attendants walk in similar downcast fashion, carrying in a fold of their cloaks, one, aeaa leaves, another, dead sticks; the third, straw or dead grasses. They move slowly around the space, and, as they go, sing the following to the Air: "*Pussy's in the Well*":

Ah! well a day!
Winter must away.
Ah! well a day!
Winter cannot stay.

All the ice and snow
With Winter must go,
All the frost and hail that chills
And kills the earth life so.

Ah ! well a day !
Winter must away.
Ah ! well a day !
Winter cannot stay.

Icicle that hangs on tree
Melted now must be,
No more may the cold wind blow
O'er shivering hedge and lea.

Ah ! well a day !
Winter must away.
Ah ! well a day !
Winter cannot stay.

Water sprites that frozen be
Watch old Winter go,
Woodland elves that hide in tree
Wake with laughter low.

Ah ! well a day !
Winter must away.
Ah ! well a day !
Winter cannot stay.

There is no one sheds a tear
For old Winter's death :
Yet he meaneth no man harm,
Sharp though be his breath.

Winter sings the refrain alone, and as he sings lays himself down in the hole in the ground :

Ah ! well a day !
Winter must away.

Ah ! well a day !
Winter cannot stay.

The three attendants carry on the refrain more softly & more slowly :

Ah ! well a day !
Winter must away.
Ah ! well a day !—

As the sound dies away, Winter lies as one dead. The three attendants slowly pace round him and drop lightly on him their burdens of sticks, leaves, and straw, singing the while :

FIRST ATTENDANT :

Oh, what shall cover our Master's sleep ?

THE OTHERS :

Spoils of his reign ! Spoils of his reign !

FIRST ATTENDANT :

Death he hath sown, and Death he shall reap.

THE OTHERS :

Spoils of his reign ! Spoils of his reign !

FIRST ATTENDANT :

What shall he take to his home in the North ?

THE OTHERS :

Spoils of his reign ! Spoils of his reign !

FIRST ATTENDANT :

What shall furnish his journeying forth ?

THE OTHERS:

Spoils of his reign ! Spoils of his reign !

All three attendants stand round Winter with uplifted hands while they sing the following lament. During the refrain they join hands and dance slowly round.

Winter our King is gone,
Follow ! Follow ! Follow ! Follow !
Come, let us make his moan,
Follow ! Follow ! Follow ! Follow !
Sadly his servants weep,
Follow ! Follow ! Follow ! Follow !
Tree, hill, and valley weep,
Follow ! Follow ! Follow ! Follow !
Earth cannot hold her tears,
Follow ! Follow ! Follow ! Follow !
Full are the brooks and meres,
Follow ! Follow ! Follow ! Follow !
Winter our King is gone,
Follow ! Follow ! Follow ! Follow !
We must follow anon.
Follow ! Follow ! Follow ! Follow !

They dance round Winter slowly and mournfully for a space, then they take up the first refrain:

Ah ! well a day !
Winter is away.
Ah ! well a day !
We can no more stay.
Ah ! well a day !
Ah ! well a day !

Singing the last lines, they lie down surrounding Winter, and even as he, seem as if dead.

Enter the Procession of Summer, girls and boys two by two dressed all in white, all bearing green branches and flowers. There should be ten or more couples. Then follows a quartette of girls bearing the May Garland, hanging from rods crossed, resting on their shoulders. The May Garland consists of two crossed hoops bound round plentifully with green and flowers and bits of ribbon in as many bright colours as possible. In the centre of the hoop is placed a figure draped in white and adorned with little sprigs of green. 'Impenetrable orthodoxy' can be satisfied by calling the figure a wax doll—in reality it is the Spirit of the Earth—the symbol of the sap of things that rises each year afresh in man and beast and plant, bringing new vigour and strength, bringing with it increase and all things fruitful. While the others in the procession may dance and antic as they please in time to their singing, the four girls who carry the garland walk soberly. To those who understand, their burden is the core of the procession. Immediately behind the May Garland walks the May Queen, clad in white and decked with flowers. She walks under a canopy of green branches held by four attendants. Behind her again walk abreast the Sun Charmer, the Rain Charmer, and the Wind Charmer, dressed, the one in yellow, the other in grey, and the third in blue. Last of all comes the Jack-in-the-green with four attendants, to whom he is attached by ropes of leaves. The procession marches round the space, singing the while :

THE CAMPDEN MAY SONG.

Unite and Unite, then let us all unite,
(For Summer is a-come in to-day !)
And whither we are going we will all go in white,
(In the merry morning of May !)

GIRLS SING :

I warn you young men every one,
(For Summer is a-come in to-day !)

To go to the green wood and fetch your May home,
(In the merry morning of May !)

CHORUS :

Unite and Unite, etc.

BOYS SING :

Go to the wood, girls every one,
(The Summer and the May, oh !)
To fetch the bonny May Bush home,
(And Winter is away, oh !)

CHORUS :

Arise, Mister . . . and joy you betide,
(For Summmer is a-come in to-day !)
And our greetings to the Lady who is waiting at your side,
(In the merry morning of May !)

Unite and Unite, etc.

GIRLS SING :

Arise, Mrs. . . . and gold is your ring,
(For Summer is a-come in to-day !)
And give us a cup of ale that merry we may sing,
(In the merry morning of May !)

Unite and Unite, etc.

BOYS SING :

Where are the maidens that should sing ?
(The Summer and the May, oh !)
They are all gone flower gathering,
(And Winter is away, oh !)

CHORUS:

With a merry swing and a joyful spring,
(For Summer is a-come in to-day!)
Happy are the birds that merrily do sing,
In the merry morning of May!)
Unite and Unite, etc.

GIRLS SING:

Arise, Mister . . . with your sword by your side,
(For Summer is a-come in to-day!)
Your steed is in the stable awaiting you to ride,
(In the merry morning of May!)
Unite and Unite, etc.

BOYS SING:

Young maids of Campden, well ye might
(The Summer and the May, oh!)
Weave you a garland of green and white.
(And Winter is away, oh!)
Unite and Unite, etc.

Arise, Mister . . . I know you well so fine,
(For Summer is a-come in to-day!)
You've a shilling in your pocket and I would that it were mine.
(In the merry morning of May!)
Unite and Unite, etc,

The procession is so arranged that the last verse of the song brings the May Queen opposite the sleeping figures of Winter and his attendants whom she sees for the first time. She steps forward, speaking:

And who are these that lie so still
While joy and mirth all hearts do fill?

[*Winter and his attendants stir uneasily in their sleep.*

The MAY QUEEN (walking round the group):

Dead leaves, dead sticks and beard so grey !
This is no time for such array !

WINTER and his attendants sleepily :

Ah ! well a day !

The MAY QUEEN :

What dismal sound is this I hear !
I'll let them know that Summer's near.

She touches them all lightly with her wand. Winter and his attendants sit up suddenly, showing their faces. As they do so, the May Queen starts back and there is a general shout of "Winter !" Winter and his train shrink back frightened and turn to run. With wild yells and shouts and laughter they all chase them round the space, except the May Queen and the May Garland. After much noise and tumbling Winter and his three attendants are caught and brought up before the May Queen.

MAY QUEEN :

Winter ! yield thee! Earth is mine ;
Gone are all your glories fine.

WINTER :

I'll not yield me ! Earth is mine !
If it's yours, show then the sign.

MAY QUEEN :

Green, green are meadows where I pass
Mowers are busy among the grass.

WINTER :

White, white are meadows where I go
Earth lies frozen beneath the snow.

MAY QUEEN :

I'll deck the trees with blossoms bright,
Whiter than ever snow was white.

WINTER :

I'll kill the trees with frost and rime ;
Branches light fires in Winter's time.

MAY QUEEN :

I am the Summer in fair array ;
The Winter I'm chasing far away.

WINTER :

I am the Winter in mantle of furs ;
I'm chasing the Summer o'er bushes and burs.

MAY QUEEN :

Say a word more and I'll have you banned
At once and for ever from Summer land.

[*She raises her wand above him.*

WINTER :

Summer, of you I am not afraid;
Winter was King before you were made.

She strikes him with her wand, at which Winter and his attendants fall to the ground. Rising again slowly, they leave behind them their

sad-coloured cloaks, disclosing the fact that underneath they are clad in white and green garlands as the attendants of the May Queen. Winter looks about him astonished & puzzled at his dress, then kneels on one knee before the May Queen, saying:

Summer ! I yield me with all my clan ;
You are the master, I am the man.

All shout and rejoice, waving their garlands and flowers with merry noise, amid which Jack-in-the-green springs forward, and catching hold of Winter, begins to dance with him, singing the following song, in which and in the dancing all soon join.

SONG OF JACK-IN-THE-GREEN.

(Air : "As I was going to Strawberry Fair.")

Oh ! merrily we'll dance ! says Jack-in-the-green;
High low ! High low ! all the earth is gaily !
Sure there never was a fellow like Jack-in-the-green,
Summer's here !
He's green on the outside, and inside he's green ;
Oh, merrily we'll dance round Jack-in-the-green !

High low ! High low ! all the earth is gaily !
High low ! High low ! all the earth is green !

I'm sleeping all the Winter, says Jack-in-the-green ;
High low ! high low ! all the earth is gaily !
Snuggling in the tree bark from frost and wind so keen,
Summer's here !
I chuckle to the wood elves and mark old Winter's roar,
And now that I'm come out we shall never see him more.

High low ! High low ! all the earth is gaily !
High low ! High low ! all the earth is green !

I've been hiding in the hillside, I've been hiding in the hedge,
High low ! High low ! all the earth is gaily !
In the daffies in the meadow, all along the river edge,
Summer's here !
In the violet in the hollow, in the primrose down the lane,
And now the hiding time is o'er and Summer's come again.

High low ! High low ! all the earth is gaily !
High low ! High low ! all the earth is green !

Do you see the corn a-blading? do you hear the blackbird call?
High low ! High low ! all the earth is gaily !
Do you hear the cuckoo singing ? and that's the best of all.
Summer's here !
The thrush is busy nesting, do you hear the finches sweet ?
The dancing green is come, and can't you feel it in your feet !

High low ! High low ! all the earth is gaily !
High low ! High low ! all the earth is green !

The green is on the meadow, the green is on the hill ;
High low ! High Low ! all the earth is gaily !
There's dancing in the water of the stream that turns the mill,
Summer's here !
There's joy in copse and spinney, forgetting winter pain ;
There's joy in heart of man and beast, the green is come again.

High low ! High low ! all the earth is gaily !
High low ! High low ! all the earth is green !

Oh, merrily we'll dance, says Jack-in-the-green ;
High low ! High low ! all the earth is gaily !
Sure there never was a fellow like Jack-in-the-green.
Summer's here !

He's green on the outside, and inside he's green,
Oh, merrily we'll dance round Jack-in-the-green.

High low ! High low ! all the earth is gaily !
High low ! High low ! all the earth is green !

While singing the last verse of this song the dancing ceases and the company range themselves in the following order. At the foot of the May Pole stands the May Queen slightly elevated above the rest; in front of her the May Garland and Jack-in-the-green, and grouped round her their attendants. The rest spread themselves out over the space so as to leave a good interval between each other, all turning towards the central point of the May Pole and May Queen. The May Queen waves her wand and all kneel on one knee and bend their faces earthward. All except the Sun Charmer, the Rain Charmer, and the Wind Charmer. These have remained on one side & now bear in their hands: the Rain Charmer a stoup of water; the Sun Charmer a long streamer of gold coloured cloth tied to a stick; the Wind Charmer a large pair of bellows.
The May Queen waves her wand again and they step forward in order, dancing and singing. As each steps forward he announces himself:

I am the Rain Charmer.
I am the Sun Charmer.
I am the Wind Charmer.

They then join together in singing the following song, dancing the while in and out the kneeling figures as they sing. The Rain Charmer scatters water lightly, so that each receives a few drops; the Sun Charmer lets his streamer trail over all; the Wind Charmer blows his bellows over all.
The Chorus is taken up by the kneeling figures raising their heads for the purpose, swaying their bodies in time to the song and resuming their original position immediately.

THE CHARMER'S SONG.

(Air : "Peace Egging.")

We are the three Charmers, we're all of one mind.

CHORUS :

We are glad of your coming, and we'll hope you'll prove kind.

Oh, yes, we'll prove kind and we'll make you good cheer,
For we come no more nigh you until the next year.

CHORUS :

Fol-de-rol de ray. Fol de ray. Fol deriddle-addle-i-o.

We'll charm you the Sun, we'll charm you the rain.

CHORUS :

We greet you and thank you, of your charms we are fain.

We'll charm you the wind and we'll make you good cheer,
For we come no more nigh you until the next year.

CHORUS:

Fol-de-rol de ray, etc.

We come from the country where Summer doth stay.

CHORUS :

Oh, leave us your treasure before you're away.

We'll leave you the best and we'll make you good cheer,
For we come no more nigh you until the next year.

CHORUS :

Fol-de-rol de ray, etc.

The rain shall be soft, the sun shall be warm.

CHORUS:
We thank you and pray you to keep us from harm.

The wind shall blow gently, we'll make you good cheer,
For we come no more nigh you until the next year.

CHORUS:
Fol de rol de ray, etc.

So go to your fields and tend to your corn.

CHORUS:
We'll love and remember you when you are gone.

We've done all our charming, the Summer is here,
And we come no more nigh you until the next year.

CHORUS:
Fol-de-rol de ray, etc.

While repeating the last line of the Chorus all rise and form a circle round the May Pole joining hand in hand and making the circle as wide as possible.
The May Queen and her attendants, the Garland bearers, Jack-in-the-green and the Charmers form a small inner circle. When all are ready, begins the May Pole dance. This should be danced as wildly and unrestrainedly as possible while taking care always to preserve the time and rhythm of the

MAY POLE SONG.
(Air: "Here we go round the Mulberry tree.")

Here we go round the May Pole Tree,
The May Pole Tree, the May Pole Tree,

Here we go round the May Pole Tree,
For now's the time to go maying !

Who was it set up the May Pole Tree ?
The May Pole Tree, the May Pole Tree.
Summer has set up the May Pole Tree,
And now's the time to go maying !

Who is it under the May Pole Tree ?
The May Pole Tree, the May Pole Tree.
Winter is under the May Pole Tree,
And now's the time to go maying !

Great is the strength of the May Pole Tree,
The May Pole Tree, the May Pole Tree,
Green is the breath of the May Pole Tree,
And now's the time to go maying !

Neighbours come ask of the May Pole Tree,
The May Pole Tree, the May Pole Tree,
Ask of the strength of the May Pole Tree,
And now's the time to go maying !

Whence the strength of the May Pole Tree ?
The May Pole Tree, the May Pole Tree,
Earth gives strength to the May Pole Tree,
And now's the time to go maying !

Here we go round the May Pole Tree,
The May Pole Tree, the May Pole Tree,
Here we go round the May Pole Tree,
And now's the time to go maying !

At the end of this dance and song the May Queen resumes her position at the foot of the May Pole with the May Garland in front of her. She stills the revel with a wave of her wand, and speaks :

Good merry folks, in each degree,
Pray you of your jollity,
Bring your gifts to the May Sprite,
Then go dance till morning light.
Feast and revel, fair and free,
Foot it lightly, hearts a-glee,
Carry joy to every one,
Winter's gone, Summer's begun,
Hang the green on every door,
Summer brings you plenty more.
Hang the green on every table,
Hang the green on byre and stable,
Hang the green where'er you go :
Indoors, outdoors, high and low,
Let the Summer sign be seen,
Thus I rule it, Summer's Queen.

With shouts and acclamation all throw flowers and wreaths at the foot of the May Garland. The procession is now re-formed, but in reverse order, i.e., *The May Queen first, then the May Garland, and marching round the space all sing again the May Song :*

Unite and unite, then let us all unite,
(For Summer is a-come in to-day),
And whither we are going we will all go in white
(In the merry morning of May).
Etc., etc.

Toward the end of the song the procession marches off the space, still singing, and the sound dies away gradually in the distance.

HERE ENDS THE MAY-DAY INTERLUDE, WRITTEN BY GERALD BISHOP FOR THE CAMPDEN CHILDREN, & FIRST PLAYED BY THEM UNDER THE DIRECTION OF MRS. C. R. ASHBEE, AT WHITSUNTIDE. MDCCCCIV.

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